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Do It All and Like It: Realities and Expectations for Music in 21st Century Higher Education

Abstract

One decade into the twenty-first century, in a complex global community of which one part is a diverse and politically polarized America, the climate in much of higher education is such that professors of music might easily feel confused, overworked and underappreciated. We work in a time when governments speak almost exclusively of primary and secondary education, of head-start programs and vocational/professional education, or of science and technology. STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) is one of the acronyms *du jour*. We work in a time, too, when funding for the arts is a frequent political football, even a scapegoat as parties bicker over aesthetic choices and suggest reforms to limit creative expression that does not conform to the ideals of particular constituencies.

Keywords

STEM, music, music in higher education, music curriculum, music faculty workloads, university music faculty, culture among music faculty in higher education, music teaching, research, service

Disciplines

Higher Education | Music | Music Education

Comments

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DO IT ALL AND LIKE IT: REALITIES AND EXPECTATIONS FOR 21ST-CENTURY MUSIC IN HIGHER EDUCATION

One decade into the twenty-first century, in a complex global community of which one part is a diverse and politically polarized America, the climate in much of higher education is such that professors of music might easily feel confused, overworked and underappreciated. We work in a time when governments speak almost exclusively of primary and secondary education, of head-start programs and vocational/professional education, or of science and technology. STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) is one of the acronyms *du jour*.¹ We work in a time, too, when funding for the arts is a frequent political football, even a scapegoat as parties bicker over aesthetic choices and suggest reforms to limit creative expression that does not conform to the ideals of particular constituencies.

On campus, we listen while university administrators pronounce many of their public initiatives, investments and their most public praise for science and technology, recognizing that these disciplines claim the national spotlight for the moment and supply a principal source of revenue for university coffers. Take the leadership to one side, however, and they are frequently generous in their praise of the arts on campus as a source of pride that brings great value to the university, particularly in outreach to the community. A professor of music can indeed feel valued, but only so much, and mostly out of print and off-camera.

New faculty in music should begin their careers in higher education fully aware of this climate. Yes, the arts bring status and value to a university. Money, however, attracts money, and STEM disciplines have federal granting agencies in place from which to solicit considerable monetary inflows for a university. The current reality is that music often appears to serve more as a loss leader than as a revenue generator in higher education: The majority of collegiate music faculty will never bring to campus multimillion dollar research initiatives in the arts; neither will they publish the kinds of research that generate significant citations. It is not from lack of effort or desire, but rather because few granting agencies exist to support multimillion dollar proposals in music, and most music research generates substantially fewer citations than do the sciences.

In spite of this environment of unequal research and funding potentials, universities will expect *both* their music and science professors, prior to tenure or promotion, to develop equally competitive research/creative activity portfolios that indicate increasing or sustained national visibility. The administration will also expect all faculty to contribute service time to the university. The difficulty for music professors arises when they must accomplish these expectations against four strong headwinds:

- 1) government disinterest or antipathy in their subject, as mentioned above, with its attendant scarce funding (which makes grant-funded course buy downs very difficult)
- 2) a national environment in which statistically 2 percent or less of the population is interested enough in classical music to support it consistently, resulting in a young generation that has so little knowledge of the art form that they matriculate with significant remediation needed
- 3) a recession beginning in 2008 that eroded both individual discretionary spending and corporate donations, causing some orchestras (historically one of the principal post-collegiate career tracks in music) to enter bankruptcy, while many performing arts series were reduced or eliminated and audiences wilted, thereby curtailing many of the off-campus opportunities for faculty to build a creative activity portfolio²
- 4) an academic work environment in which music professors frequently carry larger course loads than their research colleagues are expected to carry and at substantially lower pay, which can contribute both to considerable work fatigue and to a need to work additional hours off-campus to support a family

These headwinds exist nationwide. In an effort to keep the context more local and human, however, let me provide some specifics closer to home. I was approached for this article because I am on the music faculty at a doctoral-granting research university where I teach a five-course annual load in music history (2-3, where each course carries three credits and meets three times weekly). My position responsibility statement reads, in part:

- that I am a member of the department's resident chamber ensemble, and maintain an active performing and recording schedule with it
- that I teach music history courses as part of the music major curriculum
- that I serve as the departmental liaison to the main library and organize the department's diversity seminar series
- that although my primary efforts are directed toward teaching, I am expected to continue my scholarship principally through concerts and master classes presented nationally, and additionally through publications, grants and as a member of professional organizations.

I pursue a trio of specialties that collectively contribute to my research and creative activity portfolio:

- I perform as the concertmaster of the Des Moines Symphony (55 services a season on evenings and weekends, requiring an average monthly workload of 21 rehearsal/performance hours and 15 driving hours)
- I perform also as the violist in the internationally acclaimed Amara Piano Quartet (formerly the Ames Piano Quartet), which requires 6 weekly hours of rehearsal and an average of six to 12 concerts and master classes a season, across America and internationally
- I research and publish in the field of musicology and higher education

Over the past 15 years, in the areas of outreach and service, I have also maintained a private teaching studio ranging between two and 10 students, and have been a member of the Iowa State University Faculty Senate and its Judiciary Appeals Committee. I have assisted on department committees, and spent the necessary hours meeting with students outside of class. Additionally, I practice five to 10 hours weekly. Most weekdays during the academic year begin at 6:30 a.m. and end at 10:30 p.m., and I work the majority of weekends in a concert season. I have no children, which helps, but outside of the additional writing projects I do, my workload is not dramatically different from several of my colleagues in the department who *do* also have families. My wife, who teaches as a lecturer in my department and performs with the symphony as well, teaches more weekly contact hours in class than I do, but without the research and service obligations.

Outside employment fills the dual role of adding both to family income and to the substance of many music professors' creative activity portfolios. Since the pay received for work done in music often occupies one of the lowest salary rungs at a public research university, the context in which music faculty and colleagues in other disciplines are remunerated for their work is best discussed next.

Full professor salaries at Iowa State University range widely between individuals and depend upon many varied criteria (as they likely do elsewhere); nevertheless, one sees a noticeable disconnect between full professor salaries selected from each of three departments: music, chemistry and economics. In fiscal 2011 the approximate salaries for three professors, all of whom had achieved international research or creative recognition in their individual fields, were \$66,000 (music), \$145,000 (chemistry) and \$250,000 (economics).³

Market forces usually lie behind such wide salary disparities, especially at the hire: We know it costs considerably more to hire and retain an economist, research scientist or engineer out of private enterprise than it does to buy a performing classical musician. The costs manifest in more than base salaries as well. Universities hiring new faculty in STEM disciplines frequently foot the multimillion dollar startup bills for laboratories and research initiatives unique to the new hire, along with graduate assistants and even additional adjunct faculty to teach some portion of the curriculum while the new hire conducts research.

No such laboratory costs attach to the typical applied music professor hire. (And I have yet to hear of a university purchasing a multi-million dollar instrument to jump-start a new applied music professor's creative activity portfolio.) Additionally, departments such as music pay virtually 100 percent of their costs from tuition-generated income, while departments such as economics or chemistry may receive assistance in their costs either from indirect cost government subsidies derived from federally funded grants or state appropriations, or from excess tuition revenue from other departments within the college.⁴

History

The 21st-century collegiate music professor has inherited a workload that has arisen from nearly 50 years of change in higher education. Historically, the profile of music in higher education was Euro-centric, and many colleges and universities offered music classes only on a non-degree track. Students wishing to try for an exclusive performing career went to a conservatory, if they even required higher education at all.⁵

As the Baby Boomers began attending college, enrollments grew, and with them grew an increase in guidelines and regulations for new degree programs that were created to meet the increased demand for education across all disciplines. A second and more recent surge in diverse ethnic populations prompted another round of self-study across American universities to ensure diverse cultures were represented. Administrators and faculty grew in number to accommodate these changes, and faculty workloads expanded to cover new subject material.

Meanwhile, American culture was evolving away from its earlier Euro-centric ethnic roots and toward an American ethnic popular music, but higher education did not easily adapt alongside this popular shift. It remained true to its earlier traditions and perpetuated its historic ideals, while simultaneously finding ways to bring new topics, required by standards and regulations, as additions into the curriculum. Twenty-first-century music instruction in higher education has tried to accommodate both teaching emphases — historical and diverse — and must therefore frequently support an enlarged curriculum that requires at least

some of its faculty to teach a much wider field of information than they taught 50 years ago, and to teach it to audiences possessing a decreasing background knowledge of the field at the time of their collegiate matriculation. For music faculty, the reality of this unique moment in academic time is complex and often exhausting.

Teaching: Principal Work for Music Faculty

In a discussion of an evolving overall teaching profile over the past 50 years, Leonard Cassuto notes three examples in which the profile of American higher education has changed:

- 1) in the early 1970s at Cornell University, senior faculty in history typically taught a *heavier* course load than their junior colleagues to assist the younger professors in their career development (often the opposite of a 21st-century model)
- 2) in the 1960s at the College of William & Mary, professors routinely taught five courses a semester (a load he notes is now typically encountered only at community colleges)
- 3) in the 1970s barely 3 percent of the nation's English departments taught loads as light as 3-2 (which is commonly encountered in 21st-century English departments at research universities)⁶

In a 2012 article on faculty workloads across all disciplines, George M. Dennison wrote that "surveys of time expended by regular faculty members invariably range from 55 to 65 hours per week, higher for faculty at research universities, *not the 40-hour week usually assumed*."⁷ He continued by showing the wide disparity of possible workloads at major research universities and cited examples ranging between

One class per year for a full-time faculty member supported by the instructional budget, with 90 percent of the time and the associated salary assigned to externally funded research; to eight classes per year, with 80 percent of the time allocated to teaching supported by the instructional budget. The average consists of four classes per faculty member, with 40 percent of time allocated to teaching, 40 percent to research (partially funded externally) and 20 percent to service; and the median is five classes per faculty member, with 45 percent of time allocated to teaching, 40 percent to research (partially funded externally) and 15 percent to service.⁸

In light of this multiplicity of work environments, the best I can do here is to generalize regarding the current teaching loads of *music* faculty

across America. Employees at smaller colleges and associate-degree-granting institutions tend toward teaching loads that overbalance research obligations. Annual class loads of 5-5 are more common than 2-2 in such environments. Applied lessons, however, still tend to reference National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) guidelines of 18 student contact hours per week, and if studio loads do not meet this expectation, courses are often added to fill the void. John Dressler writes: "Very commonly those applied music teachers with less than full studios are given classroom instruction, academic advising, student teacher supervision, committee responsibilities, and duties involving the recruitment of new students in varying degrees of combination."⁹

The norm at departments within research universities is both similar to and divergent from this model. Classroom loads lean toward 2-2, with increased research and publication expectations assuming the extra hours devoted to teaching at the schools mentioned above. NASM guidelines for studio loads remain at 18 weekly contact hours, but flexibility is frequently negotiated to allow for off-campus concerts or presentations. Missed lessons are either made up following a professor's return, or are covered *in absentia* by teaching assistants.

Almost never are applied teaching and classroom teaching assigned in combination to the *same* professor. Major music schools tend to hire professors with specialized backgrounds, and in sufficient numbers to meet the students' diverse educational needs without requiring professors to assume diverse teaching duties.

On the topic of teaching, it therefore seems that only the most general observations may apply across the entire spectrum of American colleges and universities: The National Association of Schools of Music suggests fair workloads in music, and while these are referenced relatively consistently, variety appears in how they are implemented or balanced with other institutional expectations, particularly in reference to the size and quality of a faculty member's research/creative activity portfolio. There really can be no way to create universal paradigms and classifications because reality continually interferes; each position is tailored to the applicant who best fits an institution's individual need at the time of hire, and some faculty may find success in federal grant-supported projects that allow them to buy down their teaching loads for the project's duration. That said, the vast majority of music professors across the nation teach, and their typically heavy teaching commitments push their additional research or performing workloads into the personal hours of the week.¹⁰

We can make some small general claims, however, when we compare teaching loads *across disciplines* at the same institution. Using this filter, we will likely find that expected annual teaching workloads in many *non-music* disciplines require one-to-two *fewer* courses per year (2-2 or 1-2) than are

expected of music faculty (2-3) at the same institution. The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Iowa State University seems to follow the guideline that departments with graduate programs hire faculty to teach 2-2, while departments without graduate programs maintain a 2-3 load. Successful external funding, of course, may alter a faculty member's teaching load, and it more frequently does so in other fields other than the arts.

Clearly this is not an unfair practice; national research funding that is available in STEM disciplines but not in music is simply a reality. If, however, a university expects its music faculty (with little access to teaching reductions through external funding) to produce research/performance portfolios of *equivalent* quality to its faculty in other disciplines who do have access to such teaching-load reductions, and then *also* expects the musicians to teach additional courses because they *lack* the external funding to buy out of that obligation, one begins to see how music faculty can experience a disproportionately busy working environment.¹¹

We all are aware, additionally, that teaching does not cease at the classroom door. Courtney Crappell, assistant professor of piano at the University of Texas at San Antonio, reminds us that teaching at a university “includes much more than contact time spent in the classroom or in applied lessons. It includes time for office hours, student mentoring, course preparation, curriculum and assessment development, grading, managing online course materials, and more,” and he suggests that the usual division of labor into 40 percent teaching — 40 percent research — 20 percent service exists, for music faculty, in reality at levels closer to 100 percent — 100 percent — 100 percent.¹²

H. Christian Bernard found, in a 2007 study of university music faculty, that “academic faculty who typically teach 12 hours per week with class sizes ranging from 20 to 100 students, and performance faculty who typically teach 18 private lesson hours per week all experienced a degree of workload burnout,” although applied faculty experienced lower levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization than those teaching academic or a combination of academic and performance classes.¹³ Larger class loads, lower pay, lip-service praise and the administrative priorities mentioned earlier combine to create for music faculty morale a large hill to climb against a stiff headwind, and we haven't yet explored university expectations for developing a national image through a strong research/creative activity portfolio.

Research/Creative Activity: Building Reputations

In spite of disconnects between salaries and teaching loads for music versus STEM faculty at many institutions, one parallel between the disciplines can be asserted: A university's expectations for its *research* faculty to achieve national

recognition often parallels expectations for its *music* faculty to achieve similar success. As we again draw upon local specifics, the Iowa State University Faculty Handbook states the following about research across all disciplines for promotion to associate professor with tenure. Faculty need to meet these expectations regardless of whether they accomplish them in the context of a 1-1 or a 3-2 teaching load.

The candidate must demonstrate ... excellence in scholarship that establishes the individual as a significant contributor to the field or profession, with potential for national distinction; effectiveness in areas of position responsibilities, and satisfactory institutional service.

For promotion to full professor:

The candidate must demonstrate ... national distinction in scholarship, as evident in candidate's wide recognition and outstanding contributions to the field or profession; effectiveness in areas of position responsibilities, and significant institutional service.¹⁴

The research agenda in music assumes a variety of guises that depend upon individual interests and expertise, but which generally conform to one of four classifications:

- 1) data-driven studies that shed new light on faculty/student roles, aptitudes, attitudes and work environments — often conducted in the field of music education
- 2) explorations into a deeper understanding of music and composers from the recent or distant past — typically done in the history and theory disciplines
- 3) performances and recordings from the applied faculty
- 4) new compositions from the theorist-composers

Typically the quantitative studies conducted under the first classification most resemble research in STEM disciplines, and therefore typically attract external funding with greatest success. Monographs on historical figures, their compositions or practices from their time periods may bring book advances from publishing houses, yet less frequently win support from granting agencies. New compositions face daunting challenges in getting published and receiving multiple performances — all too frequently a new composition, born after

months or years of creative labor, receives an on-campus world premiere, self-publication by the composer and a long shelf life. For performing faculty, off-campus concerts are often judged using the criterion of association: The prestige of *other* invited performers to the same series validates the concert.

The area of performing opens the door to another ambiguous aspect of music faculty work — the faculty chamber ensemble — that has its own profusion of incarnations. Typically an institution with a resident ensemble will hire new faculty with the understanding that performing in the ensemble is expected. Load credit, however, is not always granted to the assignment, because the ensemble is viewed within the research component of the faculty member's workload, not teaching.

Donald Bullock's 1984 research into the role of faculty ensembles indicated that 44 percent of typical faculty chamber ensembles — woodwind quintets, piano trios, brass quintets or string quartets — receive no workload recognition, while 24 percent receive 1-10 percent release from teaching, and only 12 percent receive 11-15 percent release from teaching in order to engage in chamber music activities.¹⁵

There are arguments for and against the fairness of teaching-load release for faculty ensembles that have been written about elsewhere, but to summarize they are:

Against teaching load release

- for applied faculty, performing builds their creative activity portfolio, and the ensemble creates that opportunity, and therefore should be considered as research
- faculty performances, especially on-campus ones, should fall under the heading of *community outreach*, not research or teaching. Since, some argue, little direct teaching occurs in a concert, and — if older repertoire is emphasized — little in the way of new material is presented to bring an audience to new knowledge, a concert fulfills neither the research nor teaching roles a faculty member should assume.¹⁶

For teaching load release

- traditional research ebbs and flows, while resident ensembles often maintain weekly rehearsal obligations that more closely approximate a classroom workload commitment. A six-hour weekly commitment, for example, should carry some attendant release time from other weekly obligations.
- rehearsals cannot begin until individual parts have been learned through practice, and while it may be fair to equate *either* practice *or* rehearsal to research or teaching as a time commitment, it is not fair to

equate *both*.

I am sure there are many other arguments *pro* or *con*; however, it is not the purpose of this article to lobby for or against this particular argument. It is reasonable to assert, however, that any performing that embraces excellence requires substantial preparation, and the complexities of commissioning new musical compositions, combined with the complexities of preparing and performing them, creates an even greater time strain on music faculty that, I hope by now, are being viewed as already stretched quite thin.

Service: Keeping the Department Running

Service work typically ebbs and flows during the course of an academic year. At times it barely interrupts a faculty member's teaching and research agenda, and at others it nearly paralyzes any outside work. Faculty committees within a department meet as needed and, unless a major change is imminent, tend not to interfere with regular weekly teaching and research obligations. Periodic stressors such as curriculum changes or new mandates from government or accrediting agencies can wrinkle a faculty member's schedule. The time-intensive work of a search committee for a new hire, or an accreditation review, however, can derail almost any creative activity agenda for the duration of the process.

Every institution will expect this kind of labor from its faculty in order that the department and college continue to run effectively. It is uncommon that a faculty member with a strong research and teaching profile will be denied promotion for insufficient service; however, notice of inadequate service is not without potential repercussions, often experienced through lower merit raises.

For music faculty, service must necessarily include two time-intensive commitments that professors in other disciplines experience less frequently: collaborating in on-campus concerts (including practice, rehearsals and performances with colleagues), and attending student recitals (from both one's own and one's colleagues' studios). My experience has been that no other discipline produces anywhere near the number of monthly public events expecting faculty attendance as does a music department. Upward of 20 monthly events, each lasting one to three hours, can add a minimum of 10 unremunerated service hours to a music faculty's workload on top of teaching, research and committee work.

Service obligations are a workload reality, and faculty need to understand and assimilate these both musical and non-musical obligations. Several research projects in higher education have shown that faculty who do understand these various roles and their responsibilities toward them early in their careers achieve a higher level of job satisfaction.¹⁷ My own succinct statement to my students is

that music is not a “career” as much as it is a “way of life.” While we *within* the profession may grow to understand that in time, it is difficult to convey to an administrator who comes from a different field just how time-intensive our way of life is.

Changing Expectations: The Present

As 2012 came to a close with several major orchestras in lockout or bankruptcy, with many orchestras governed by a management at odds with its union players, and with the rite of entry to such orchestras relying upon five-minute-long, applicant-expensed auditions with slim chances of success — all to win a position that too often pays under \$40,000 a year — music graduates with a post-baccalaureate degree who do not choose public school careers have come to view higher education as one of their most viable employment choices. Higher education provides a modest but livable wage and a stable life environment that encourages creative activity through the diverse avenues of performing, recording, research, publication, composition and conference presentations.

The atmosphere has therefore changed dramatically from the late 1970s, when a music career in higher education carried a silent stigma: One taught only if one had been unable to make it as a performer. The line I remember from that time, which came from an adaptation of a line from George Bernard Shaw’s *Man and Superman* (1903), “Maxims for Revolutionists” (maxim #36), was: “He who can, does; he who can’t, teaches; he who can’t teach, teaches music.”¹⁸ In those days, however, all the major performing talents could be heard frequently in well-attended sonata and chamber music recitals, in addition to their appearances with orchestras. A living in music could be made through several avenues outside the gates of academia.

The 21st century reveals the traditional sonata recital to be essentially dead outside of annual on-campus faculty performances; chamber music is dominated by a select few specialized ensembles, which are themselves dominated by string quartets and piano trios. The few orchestral soloists (in turn dominated by violinists and pianists) only rarely make enough to live entirely off their concerto appearances, and many orchestras are struggling, as I just mentioned.

Academia is replacing the public concert stage as the career of choice among musicians, and it only makes sense that, as it becomes more desirable it also demands competitively more from its members. I have personally witnessed the competition for mid-level university positions that now includes performers with very established international careers. And since departments and schools of music continue to matriculate music majors and graduate them into the difficult and increasingly marginalized world of classical music, the marketplace has become glutted with talented and well-trained music graduates looking for work. With few other viable options, the supply/demand equation indicates salaries

need not be high, nor workloads light, in order to make a position attractive.

The present scene, therefore, suggests that for the foreseeable future higher education will recruit new faculty to positions that continue the current trend: higher teaching loads with equal research expectations at lower pay compared to what is offered elsewhere in the university. The fact that American culture has shifted its interest away from traditional music and no longer cries out in objection to a decreased presence of the classical arts in society only solidifies the likelihood of the present reality continuing into the future.

One small indication of the decreased value music and the arts are experiencing in higher education manifests in the near impossibility of finding data, especially online, that places a *quantifiable* value upon music departments (or creative arts departments) in ranking a university internationally. QS World University Rankings®, for example, provides subject areas for its university rankings that include arts and humanities, engineering and technology, life sciences and medicine, natural sciences, social sciences, and management. It then divides the “arts and humanities” subject heading into philosophy, modern languages, geography, history, linguistics, and English language and literature. Performing arts are not included.¹⁹

Are the arts overlooked because they do not contribute a statistically meaningful data set for ranking a university? Or are they omitted because criteria for evaluating the arts across a nation are nebulous when compared to the standard objective metrics in the sciences that use articles published and their attendant citation trails? How does one count, for example, the number of times a recording is referenced as a listener discovers the best way to interpret a piece, or the number of times a performer or performance is mentioned as representing the ideal? Why the arts are overlooked is a mystery to me, but *that* they are overlooked is a reality and provides a substantial headwind against which music, as a discipline, must struggle in 21st-century America.

Changing Expectations: The Future

In spring 2012, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Iowa State University welcomed a new dean to campus. During the prior dean’s administration, the nation underwent the fiscal crisis of 2008, during which time many universities cut any perceived excess from their budgets in order to remain financially viable. Iowa State University survived that time better than some institutions; yet during those self studies, music at Iowa State was classified as a teaching-dominant unit of the college, offsetting the more research-centric units like economics, mathematics, chemistry and physics.

Fast forward to the present day, and the new dean, during her visit to the

music faculty in September 2012, stated her hope that all departments in the college — music included — would increase their external grant and research profile. The reason given was the university's desire to remain a member of the American Association of Universities (AAU), which places a premium on research faculty and faculty receiving Fulbright awards. Has the music department at Iowa State University had the principal emphasis of its working environment modified by successive administrations within the space of two short years?

The new dean is also in the process of establishing a set of five “signature themes,” which she believes will give our college's research enterprise a strategic focus and a recognizable identity, and which will define the college's scholarly vision and provide a framework for faculty hiring and collaborations, strengthening our national and international recognition. These themes, which have now appeared in two separate drafts circulated to faculty, include labels such as “biological structures and systems,” “complex materials,” “data-rich environments,” “economic, environmental and societal sustainability,” and finally “global citizens, education and technology.”

Nowhere in the titles or in the descriptive text for these themes do the words “arts,” “music” or any similar wording appear, and these themes are to represent the College of Liberal *Arts* and Sciences. It remains to be seen what tangible results will accrue once the new administration finds its footing and establishes its priorities, but this moment at my university speaks to the tenor of this issue of JPALHE.

We are working in a time when expectations for faculty in the performing arts at American universities is in flux, and in a time when the administration sends frequent and consistent messages that the arts may be valued verbally, but not in print. The conflict between expectation and reward has just intensified. It appears we will likely continue with high teaching loads, with increased research expectations, all within the environment of a published set of “themes” that completely ignores us. Has this arisen because we chose to emphasize historic values and topics in a modern world? Have our choices caused us to be left behind?

In 2006 Richard Colwell alluded to a 1992 speech by Nel Noddings that suggested an ideal world in which the present music curriculum that has effectively been obsolete for at least two centuries was completely eliminated.²⁰ He countered that, while he believed Nodding's suggestion was too aggressive, the idea of teaching others exclusively how to repeat one's own vocational competency seems to be a dying educational paradigm. The need for many Tchaikovsky violin concerto performances has decreased (and is met by fewer celebrity musicians), while the need for new ideas, interdisciplinary thinking, multitasking in the arts, identifying and ameliorating new musical directions has increased. He asserts instead that:

Teachers need to be able to take the diverse elements of the student's world and that of the world of the arts and merge those elements into a coherent whole (p. 25), [and] they need to think critically and creatively, they need to be problem solvers, they need to be able to establish priorities among experiences and values, they need to be able, to some extent, to relate music to the rest of American culture and relate music to the other arts.²¹ (p. 26-7)

Conversations and debates are also beginning to arise on the Internet, raising concern that too many music majors are granted in America with too few traditional positions available to be filled by the new graduates. The current arts climate in America essentially renders a student's four-plus years of study valueless from the point of finding employment in the field.²² From the other side of the coin, employment at schools anywhere below the very top tier often requires new hires to possess diverse abilities in order to cover multiple departmental needs. Many music graduates, who have navigated a music degree that highlighted traditional paradigms and historic topics, are not adequately trained to fulfill these multilateral obligations.

Where does all this leave us? It appears that the early 21st century finds collegiate music faculty arriving as new hires with old-fashioned training only to work long hours teaching a wide spectrum of music (which they may not be qualified or prepared through their education to teach), while simultaneously serving on committees, performing concerts, composing, and writing articles in an effort to keep their jobs and gain promotion.

The field of music in higher education needs (and soon) a thorough data-driven study done across a spectrum of universities that studies music faculty teaching loads alongside their expectations for research/creative activity, average weekly hours spent at work, and average salaries, and compares them — using similar criteria — to the expectations for professors in other disciplines. Hard data presented in a clear and authoritative way would supply the conviction of objective fact to the more general observations I make here. Perhaps my effort can be considered an opening salvo to a project that begins with carefully devised questionnaires and consultation of university budgets, and applies statistical analysis to provide the kind of study that ultimately reveals reliable, quantifiable and recent information about our field of work.

Suffice it to say, in conclusion, that the time has probably again come to scrutinize the field of music in higher education and ask painful questions. Does the international market for the arts justify the education we currently offer? Have we reached a time of "adapt or die"? And if not, how do we convince an administration with its attention focused on the lucrative sciences that the salary-to-labor ratio for music faculty is unbalanced? None of these questions offers easy answers. If the role music once held as a part of the *Quadrivium* in

500 A.D. could be re-established — describing in part how the universe worked — music could reign supreme once again. Without something on that order, however, I see rough roads and long workdays ahead.

...

Jonathan Sturm is Professor of Music at Iowa State University (ISU), concertmaster of the Des Moines Symphony and violist in the Amara Piano Quartet (formerly the Ames Piano Quartet). He has performed internationally; recorded for the Dorian/Sono Luminus, Albany and Cesky labels; published articles in *American Music Teacher*, *American String Teacher* and *Journal of Performing Arts Leadership in Higher Education*; written entries for music encyclopedias; and has a chapter in a forthcoming book on the topic of “Faust in Music” to be published by Oxford University Press. He serves on the faculty senate at ISU as the chair of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences caucus.

Endnotes

- ¹ The NGA (National Governors Association) has initiatives that emphasize science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) as important skills, but also has initiatives pairing the arts and economic growth. See the NGA Center for Best Practices website: www.nga.org/cms/center/edu.
- ² Patricia Cohen wrote in 2009 that at Washington State University the department of theater arts and dance had been eliminated; at Florida State University the undergraduate program in art education and two graduate theater programs were being phased out; the University of Arizona was cutting three-quarters of its funds (more than \$500,000, for visiting classical music, dance and theater performers); Wesleyan University’s Center for the Arts would lose 14 percent of its \$1.2 million budget over the following two years, and the Louisiana State University Museum of Art would see 20 percent of its state financing disappear. See: Patricia Cohen, “Arts Programs in Academia Are Forced to Nip Here, Adjust There,” *The New York Times*, August 10, 2009 Monday, section C, pg. 1.
- ³ This information is public knowledge at Iowa State University, since it is a public institution. It will require another article to delve into the details of faculty salary inequities for full-time workloads, not to mention the two-class system that many universities have adopted by titling some of their hardest-working faculty as lecturers or adjuncts. These faculty often possess a similar knowledge base to many of their tenured colleagues, and while they may sidestep the service and research components of a tenure-line hire, they teach extra course loads, work as many if not more hours, and yet for only 50-70 percent of the salary devoted to their tenure-line colleagues.
- ⁴ The most recent year for which I have data is 2009, when the music department at ISU generated 100 percent of its budget from tuition, while chemistry generated 57 percent and economics generated 70 percent. As I understand it, revenue from departments that exceeded 100 percent of their costs in tuition dollars helped to subsidize departments that had insufficient revenue of their own, either from tuition dollars or the indirect cost portion of federal grant funding. Thus, faculty in departments such as music not only were paid less than their colleagues, but indirectly subsidized their colleagues’ higher salaries and lighter teaching loads.
- ⁵ See Elliott Schwartz, “The Composer in the Liberal Arts College,” *Philosophy of Music Education Review*, vol. 19, no. 1 (Spring 2011), 37-51. Schwartz presents a concise history and supports the viewpoint that, in spite of heavy workloads he finds the work he does emotionally and professionally satisfying.
- ⁶ Leonard Cassuto, “Faculty Immobility in the New Economy; Imagine the star system if no one could go anywhere,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. July 10, 2011. www.lexisnexis.com/hottopics/lnacademic (accessed August 24, 2012).

- ⁷ George M. Dennison, "Faculty Workload: An Analytic Approach," *Innovative Higher Education*, vol. 37, no. 4 (August 2012), 301.
- ⁸ Dennison, 301.
- ⁹ John C. Dressler, "The Impact of Faculty Workload in Applied Music on Research Productivity," *College Music Symposium*, vol. 26 (1986), 149.
- ¹⁰ The closest most universities come to hiring a music professor who performs almost exclusively and does little consistent teaching (paralleling perhaps the research science hire who works almost exclusively in a lab) is the glamour hire seen with few exceptions at only the most prestigious schools of music. These artists-in-residence are a distinct minority across American higher education, and serve mostly to add prestige, visibility and the hope of attracting high-caliber students.
- ¹¹ One colleague of mine in philosophy recently admitted an official 1-1 teaching load, though he stated he regularly exceeds that. His work is full time, but his teaching commitment is lower than a 3-2 academic music faculty load, while the salary is considerably higher.
- ¹² Courtney Crappell, "Considering Careers In Music: Is An Academic Job Right For Me?" *American Music Teacher*, vol. 61, no. 1 (August 2011), 10. Academic Search Elite, EBSCOhost (accessed August 24, 2012).
- ¹³ H. Christian Bernhard II, "A Survey of Burnout Among University Music Faculty," *College Music Symposium*, vol. 47 (2007), 124.
- ¹⁴ See sections 5.2.3.2 and 5.2.3.3 of the *Iowa State University Faculty Handbook*, accessible at www.provost.iastate.edu/sites/default/files/uploads/fh/2012a-faculty-handbook.pdf. The university recognizes (in section 5.2.2.2.1 "The Meaning of Scholarship") that, "The nature of scholarly work at a diverse university necessarily varies. In the promotion and tenure review process, however, evidence that a significant portion of a faculty member's scholarship has been documented (i.e., communicated to and validated by peers beyond the university) is required of *all*." (italics mine)
- ¹⁵ Donald Bullock, "A Model for Faculty Performing Ensembles," *College Music Symposium*, vol. 24 no. 2 (Fall 1984), 16.
- ¹⁶ Donald Bullock argued that faculty ensembles should really only claim "research" status if their work produced new compositions or ways of approaching historic compositions. A faculty ensemble that predominantly revived old masterpieces, he maintained, contributed nothing more to furthering the field of knowledge in its discipline than reporting on old research discoveries would do in the sciences.
- ¹⁷ Luis Ponjuan, Valerie Martin Conley and Cathy Trower, "Career Stage Differences in Pre-Tenure Track Faculty Perceptions of Professional and Personal Relationships with Colleagues," *Journal of Higher Education* 82, no. 3 (May 2011), 325. Academic Search Elite, EBSCOhost (accessed August 24, 2012). Ponjuan references prior research conducted by Olsen, Maple & Stage (1995) and by Seifert and Umbach (2008).
- ¹⁸ The original maxim by Shaw can be accessed online at: www.bartleby.com/157/6.html.
- ¹⁹ See the criteria for inclusion in the *QS World University Rankings*® at www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/world-university-rankings/2011/subject-rankings/.
- ²⁰ Nel Noddings, "Excellence as a guide to educational conversations, Presidential Address from the proceedings of the 48th Annual Meeting of the Philosophy of Education Society, 1-8. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- ²¹ Richard Colwell, "Music Teacher Education in This Century: Part II." *Arts Education Policy Review* 108 no. 2 (November, 2006), 25 and 26-7. Academic Search Elite, EBSCOhost (accessed December 10, 2012).
- ²² See: David Cutler, "The Coming Melt-Down in Music Higher Education (and some hopeful solutions)." www.savvymusician.com/blog/2010/10/the-coming-melt-down-in-music-higher-education/ (accessed November 26, 2012). Also see: Michelle Jones, "The End of the Symphony and How Today's Music Students Should Adapt." www.violinist.com/blog/Vinylinist/20129/13914/ (accessed September 24, 2012).